Under Fives Roundabout

Food & Drink Policy

Policy No: 1.18

Last reviewed: September 2025

To be reviewed by: Oct 2026

Responsible member of staff: Samantha Capes **Date:** 24/09/2025

Responsible member of Committee: Sam Minnaar**...** **Date:** 24.11.25

Food and drink policy

Statement of intent

Under Fives Roundabout regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of the daily routine. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

Aim

We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs. We are committed to promoting children's health and well-being. We adhere to the nutrition guidelines provided by the Government.

Procedures

- Before a child begins at Preschool, we ask families to inform us of any dietary requirements, including any allergies/intolerance, religious beliefs or lifestyle choices.
- Parents/Guardians record their child's dietary needs on the registration form and in their 'All About Me' pack. If anything is unclear, the child's keyperson or manager will discuss this with the family.
- We regularly consult with parents/guardians to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs, including any allergies, are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's needs, so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about what foods or ingredients should be avoided and what should be included.
- For children who have allergy action plans in place, staff are trained on how to access these plans and follow the procedures described within them, including action to take in case of an emergency and correct administration of prescribed medication.
- We are a nut free environment and ask that no nuts (or products containing nuts) are brought into our setting. We inform all families and/or carers of the potential risk of foods brought from home for other children.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink which is consistent with their dietary needs and their parents' wishes.
- We clearly label all food with ingredients (including allergens).

- We require staff to show sensitivity in meeting the children's dietary needs by balancing safety and inclusion. Where appropriate food modification is made for children.

- We ensure that children avoid art/craft or other activities involving food that is inappropriate for that child (for example play dough or pasta).

- We store foods and items containing allergens separately from other foods.

- We avoid cross contamination by:
  - ❖ Regular hand washing
  - ❖ Wearing gloves when preparing and serving food
  - ❖ Using colour-coded equipment and utensils, or practices such as labelling a child's cup with their name if they have a milk allergy
  - ❖ Having separate preparation areas for foods that are allergens

- We provide nutritious food at all snack times, avoiding high quantities of fat, sugar and salt, and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.

- We include foods from each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones during our cooking activities.

- We use strategies to encourage good choices:
  - ❖ Modelling – children eat together and can see other children and staff eating.
  - ❖ Exposure – we give children regular and repeated chances to try new foods.
  - ❖ Rewards – we praise children for trying new foods.

- We recognise the diversity of our families and consider religious beliefs, medical needs and lifestyle choices for each child. Through information sharing between staff and families, we are able to tailor the food and drink provision to meet the needs of the children within our care.

- We celebrate special occasions with children, such as birthdays and religious festivals. Parents can bring food from home for the children to share on such occasions. We discourage bringing in food that is high in saturated fat, sugar and salt and ask parents to be mindful of potential allergens such as wheat and reinforce that we are a "nut free" environment.

- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.

- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, preparing and serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and which take into account the eating practices of their cultures.
- Children should bring in their own water bottle from home. Fresh drinking water is always available.
- We inform families about the storage facilities available in the Preschool.
- Families are advised to send their child(ren)'s food into Preschool in a suitable container (such as packed lunch bag).
- Children should not share or swap their food with other children.
- For children who drink milk, we provide full fat milk
- Growing and cooking activities give children many learning opportunities and we include them in our planning.
- All staff are Paediatric First Aid Trained (to deal with any allergic reactions or choking incidents).
- All staff are trained in Food Hygiene.
- New members of staff and visitors are given information about the rules on bringing food into our setting before arrival.

<u>Lunch</u>

- Children attending our lunch sessions bring their own packed lunch.
- We encourage families to provide a healthy, balanced lunch and we include information in our welcome pack about this.
- Packed lunches are stored appropriately; parents are encouraged to include a cool pack in the lunch box.
- At least one member of staff will sit with the children at the table while they eat and will often eat with the children, giving an example of healthy eating.

- Staff members always ensure that all of the children are provided with a drink of water with their lunch.

Allergens

Children can develop allergies at any time. As children may be trying some foods for the first time within our setting, staff are trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction. If it is suspected that a child has a food allergy, we will encourage families and/or carers to seek advice and diagnosis from a doctor. We will continue with ongoing discussions with families and/or carers and, where appropriate, health professionals to develop an allergy action plan for managing any known food allergies and intolerances. This information is kept up to date by the child's key worker and shared with all staff.

There are 14 common allergens as follows:

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten (such as wheat, barley and oats and some flours)
- Crustaceans (such as prawns, crabs and lobsters)
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin (such as bread made using lupin seeds)
- Milk
- Molluscs (such as mussels and oysters)
- Mustard
- Peanuts
- Sesame
- Soybeans
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (sometimes found in dried fruits and fruit juices)
- Tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts).

This list is not exhaustive and children may attend our setting with other allergies. DfE's help for early years providers website has a full list of common food allergens. Common_allergens.pdf